Plans 'Surprise' Ray's Attorney

By CAROL BYRD
Journal State Reporter

James Earl Ray's attorney, Mark Lane, said Tuesday he was both "surprised and pleased" on learning of his client's upcoming marriage to Knoxvillian Anna Sandhu.

"I was indeed surprised," Lane said in a phone interview from San Francisco. "I knew he liked Anna a lot. But he doesn't talk about personal things that much, so I had no idea what he was planning.

"I talked with James today (Tuesday) and he confirmed he is getting married. I said 'congratulations.' He laughed and said 'thank you.'"

Ray, who is serving a 99-year prison term in Brushy Mountain State Penitentiary for the 1968 slaying of civil rights leader the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and Mrs. Sandhu, a free-lance artist, plan to wed within two weeks.

Announcement of their engagement was first published in a copyrighted story in Tuesday's Knoxville Journal.

"I think it's a marvelous thing," Lane continued. "I like Anna a lot. It will be very good for James to have someone around who loves and cares for him."

Mrs. Sandhu was one of two persons to accompany Ray and Lane to Washington in August for hearings before the House Committee on Assassinations.

Lane said he plans to return to Memphis within a few days, where he has moved his legal office as part of his attempt to secure a trial by jury for Ray.

"I told him I'd be very pleased to be present at his wedding," Lane said. "He's allowed to have five witnesses."

Ray

Mrs. Sandhu

The wedding will be held under security guard at the maximum security prison's visitor's room. Mrs. Sandhu will be allowed to visit with Ray following the ceremony until the end of normal visiting hours.

"I guess I'll have to commute a lot between Knoxville and Petros," she said in an interview with The Journal. "James is allowed two visits a week, of four hours each. And that's about it."

She further explained that Ray didn't really propose, but their plans for marriage came "as a mutual understanding of our feelings.

"I admired him because I thought he had the courage to stand up for what he believed," she added. "And our relationship just grew from there."

It will be the second marriage for Mrs. Sandhu, and the first for Ray.

Mrs. Sandhu at first declined to discuss her wedding plans with Ray, saying that she feared "retaliation" from persons who didn't understand her reasons for marrying Ray.

"I just know that I've found no racial hatred in him at all," she said. "And I want people to know what a nice man he is. I know he's not capable of murder."